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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-first year

Identical letters dated 16 June 2016 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Tensions continue to escalate in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, owing to the unrelenting, illegal and repressive practices being carried out by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people whom it has been holding captive under its nearly five-decade-long occupation.

For the Palestinian people living under Israeli occupation, there is never a moment of peace or security. Besides the suffocating control of nearly every aspect of daily life, precluding any sense of normalcy, the occupying Power seems determined to do all that it can to make their already difficult living conditions as unbearable as possible. I draw attention, for example, to an incident that occurred yesterday, 15 June 2016, when the occupying Power deliberately cut crucial water supplies to large areas of the occupied West Bank, leaving tens of thousands of Palestinians without access to safe drinking water.

In this regard, the occupying Power's water company "Mekorot", the main supplier of water to Palestinian towns and cities, siphoned off water supplies from the town of Jenin, several Nablus villages and the city of Salfit and its surrounding villages. In some of those areas, Palestinian civilians had not received water for more than 40 days. This collective punishment measure is a dangerous development given the hardships Palestinians already face in terms of access to safe, clean water owing to Israel's diversion of water sources, discriminatory allocation of water and prohibition of Palestinian development of water infrastructure. This illegal, punitive action is even more provocative and insensitive in the light of the fact that it has been carried out during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan.

According to a recent report by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

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(A/71/86-E/2016/13), the average domestic consumption rate among Palestinians is approximately 40 litres per capita per day and drops to 20 litres per capita per day in several communities in so-called "Area C", compared with 183 litres per capita per day for Israeli settlers, all of whom have been illegally transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Of the Palestinian communities in so-called "Area C", 70 per cent are not connected to a water network (A/71/86-E/2016/13). Now, with this latest illegal measure by the occupying Power, Palestinian families, in the beginning months of summer, must live on only 2, 3 or to 10 litres per capita per day, according to Ayman Rabi, the Executive Director of the Palestinian Hydrology Group. The international community must call on Israel, the occupying Power, to end the use of water as a weapon against the occupied Palestinian people and to end its obstruction of the Palestinian people's right to clean water.

This violation comes on the heels of the occupying Power's revocation of more than 80,000 permits obtained by Palestinians to travel throughout the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem, or to visit family elsewhere, including in Israel. Such a revocation of travel permits for Palestinians amounts to collective punishment, which is prohibited under international law. This assessment was articulated by the spokesperson of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, who expressed concern about the revoking of permits, "which may amount to prohibited collective punishment and will only increase the sense of injustice and frustration felt by Palestinians in this very tense time". The international community must condemn the occupying Power for all policies and practices intended to collectively punish the entire Palestinian civilian population and should not accept Israeli pretexts for such illegal measures. This can and will only stoke greater anger, resentment and tensions and must be immediately addressed.

On another front, Israel continues with its illegal settlement-building. We condemn the latest approval by the occupying Israeli authorities of a permit for a pro-settlement organization to construct a four-storey building in the area of Batan Al-Hawa in the Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan in Occupied East Jerusalem. The Batan Al-Hawa neighbourhood is one of the most densely populated areas in the city. The Israeli human rights organization Peace Now stated back in October 2015 that the population of illegal settlers associated with the pro-settlement organization "Ateret Cohanim" had doubled in size in the Batan Al-Hawa neighbourhood over the past year. There are at least 300,000 Israeli settlers illegally residing in Occupied East Jerusalem, with at least 500 of them in Silwan, among a population of 45,000 Palestinian civilians. Moreover, the United Nations Environment Programme has reported that the settler population in the West Bank may have reached 750,000, and it should be noted that many of those settlers continue to harass, intimidate and commit acts of violence and terror against Palestinian civilians with total impunity. We condemn and reject the occupying Power's illegal policies attempting to change the facts on the ground, which undermine the viability of the ever-diminishing two-State solution.

In addition to carrying out ongoing settlement activities, Israel continues to commit grave violations against the Palestinian people, violating nearly every human right on a daily basis. Palestinian civilians, among them children, continue to be killed or seriously injured as the occupying forces continue to use excessive, indiscriminate force against our defenceless people. While the Palestinian leadership condemns the killing of civilians, no matter who they may be, the same cannot be said about the Israeli Government, whose policies and directives are the

primary source of the sheer disregard for Palestinian life exhibited by the Israeli occupying forces. Without protection for the Palestinian people, more and more Palestinians will be killed as they continue to suffer under this occupation, awaiting the realization of their freedom and rights.

While it is impossible to record every single crime perpetrated daily by the Israeli occupying forces and terrorist settlers against the Palestinian people, listed below are just some of the many crimes committed by Israel in the recent period, including, inter alia, home demolitions, mass arrests and detentions, along with its ongoing illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, all clearly intended to make the lives of Palestinian civilians as miserable as possible and severely affecting every man, woman and child:

8 June 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained three Palestinian fishermen while they were sailing offshore Gaza.
- Israeli settlers razed Palestinian-owned land in the village of Al-Khader, south of Bethlehem.
- Occupying forces detained 16 Palestinians, including children, in mostly overnight raids in the West Bank.
- Occupying forces issued/renewed administrative detention orders for 34 Palestinian detainees. Eleven of the detainees received administrative detention orders for the first time, while the remaining 23 received renewed orders.

9 June 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 12 Palestinians in raids across the West Bank.
- Extremist Israeli settlers spray-painted racist graffiti on walls in the Arab village of Abu Ghoush, north-west of East Jerusalem.

10 June 2016

- Hassan Khalid Al-Qadhi (age 26), a mentally disabled youth, was shot and injured by occupying forces at the Awarta illegal checkpoint, east of Nablus.
- Occupying forces detained at least 12 Palestinians during a large-scale military raid across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- An Israeli settler ran over a flock of sheep belonging to a Palestinian shepherd near the village of Al-Zubeidat in Jericho, killing 25 of the sheep.

11 June 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained 11 Palestinians from the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Occupying forces, accompanied by armoured bulldozers, raided the village of Beit Amra, in southern Al-Khalil, and demolished the two-storey family home of Murad Id'ais without prior notice and forcibly prevented the family from removing their possessions.

12 June 2016

- Israeli naval boats opened fire on Palestinian fishermen offshore the city of Rafah in southern Gaza Strip.

13 June 2016

- Occupying forces detained 16 Palestinians, including a child, in the West Bank.
- More than 50 olive trees and 100 dunums of agricultural land located behind the Wall in Qalqilya were set on fire by Israeli occupying forces.

14 June 2016

- Palestinian prisoner Bilal Kayid began a hunger strike to protest being placed under administrative detention for six months following the completion of his 14-year sentence in an Israeli prison.
- Occupying forces detained 17 Palestinians in raids across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

15 June 2016

- Israeli occupying forces detained 11 Palestinians, mostly during pre-dawn raids into the West Bank.
- A Palestinian youth, Saleh Abu Al-Anad (age 21), sustained serious wounds when he was run over by an Israeli occupying vehicle during a pre-dawn military raid into the Balata refugee camp, east of Nablus.
- Israeli navy forces detained 10 Palestinian fishermen while they were sailing offshore Gaza.

The Palestinian leadership condemns all of Israel's illegal, inhumane and destructive actions and calls on the international community, including the Security Council, to demand an end to all such Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. This illegal and belligerent Israeli occupation must end in all its manifestations. There is no political, legal, security or moral justification whatsoever for the continued denial of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including to self-determination and freedom. Moreover, the Security Council cannot continue to be absolved of its responsibilities and must act urgently to avert further destabilization of the situation. Every day in which the international community does not act to confront this crisis is another day in which innocent lives are disfigured and another day in which hopes for a peaceful solution to this conflict further evaporate.

This letter is in follow-up to our 587 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 7 June 2016 (A/ES-10/723-S/2016/516), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being

committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations